

### What is a Bed stick?

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A bed stick is used to assist with rolling over in bed, sitting up from a lying position, getting in and out of bed and providing support when standing.

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A bed stick is NOT designed to prevent someone from falling out of bed

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### Clinical Assessment Considerations

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- Before providing a bed stick, ensure alternative techniques have been assessed.
  - Can the person roll, use the edge of the bed to pull on?
  - Could silky sheets or silky sleep wear assist?
  - Can the bed be raised or lowered to assist with bed transfer?
  - Can options such as a bed wedge or backrest raise be trialed?
  - Is the prescription of an adjustable bed appropriate?
- If the prescription of a bed stick is being considered use the SWEP '**Bed, Mattress & Bed Equipment Assessment Tool**' to evaluate the risk associated with prescribing a bed stick. Document your clinical reasoning and decision in all clinical notes
- Be aware that there are different bed stick styles (e.g. single point vs curved/dual pole vs horizontal bed stick). Consider match of bed stick style and consumer attributes (e.g. transfer technique, impalement risk, entrapment risk)
- If prescribing a bed stick to be used consider level of entrapment risk. If the level of entrapment risk considering entrapment zones (zones 1 and 3 may be relevant). Use SWEP '**Bed, Mattress & Bed Equipment Assessment Tool**' - **Appendix 1**
  - Take steps to eliminate non-compliant zones or consider whether prescription of a bed stick is appropriate
- There will be times where prescription of a bed stick is not an appropriate solution to support independence in bed mobility or transfers.
  - Consider alternatives such as increased carer support or alternative AT item options (eg slide board).

### Precautions/Recommendations

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- A bed stick should **NOT** be provided if the user has a history of falling / rolling out of bed.

**Bed Stick Clinical Considerations for AT Practitioners**

**For more information contact Independent Living Centre 1300 885 885**

- Review person's risk of bed stick use if the person currently has a bed stick in place and has recently fallen or is at increased risk of falling / rolling from the bed
- If there is an anticipated risk of the person falling against / onto the bed stick during bed transfers, a round ended bed stick should be provided
- Use caution in prescribing a bed stick if the person has an existing upper limb pain/ injury
- Consider if the person's cognition or medication use impacts on their safe use of a bed stick
- The bed stick should typically be positioned close to the waist when the person is lying in bed, and not too close to the head/upper body
- Two styles of bed sticks pictured below are not recommended for use at all due to high risk of impalement:



Bed Stick Standard



Bed Stick Mambo

If a person being reviewed is using these styles of bed sticks consideration should be given to removal or replacement.

For non- adjustable beds:

- Do **NOT** tie or fix the bed stick to the bed (unless it has been designed for this purpose) as the mattress may still move/flip
- Ensure sufficient weight is placed upon the bed stick to limit its movement while the user is in bed and using the item for repositioning and/or transfers.

If mattress weight is not sufficient the bed stick may be **unstable**.

- Under mattress bed sticks are **NOT** suitable for water beds, beds with an elevating bed head or metal-based beds with springs
- Non-slip matting may be used to assist with keeping the bed stick in place, however consideration of weight on bed stick when in use.

### For adjustable beds:

- **Only** use clamp on bed sticks with adjustable beds (moving parts within adjustable beds make slide in bed sticks unsafe for use)
- The clamp must be the **same size** for the bed frame so there is not movement in the bed stick

### Installations Considerations

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- Must be installed by supplier or your AT Practitioner
- Position bed stick at the side, near the waist of the person using it.
  - Ensure the bed stick is not too close to the bed head
- Adjust the bed stick position after trial with the person as required
- Consider marking the optimal position of the bed stick on the bed frame to ensure correct placement
- To minimise entrapment risk, ensure there is no gap between the vertical component(s) and mattress. Check that the bed stick and mattress cannot easily move and create a gap
- If using the clamp on variety on an adjustable bed, install by clamping firmly in position. The clamp size needs to be the same as the Bed frame tubing.
- Check that the bed stick is not bending when the person is using it

### Person/Carer Instructions

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- Demonstrate to the person how to turn over, get in and out of bed and sit up as appropriate
- Observe the person doing above
- Advise the person/carers that both the bed stick and the mattress may move and create a gap, posing a risk of trapping parts of the body and causing injury
- Instruct person/carers(s) to check the bed stick **DAILY** to ensure the bed stick has not moved out of position
- If the bed stick is a clamp on variety (for adjustable beds) instruct the person/carers to check that the clamp is still holding on a **DAILY** basis
- Instruct person/carers not to hang items (e.g. face washer, handkerchief etc.) on the bed stick

### Review

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Every 12 months (were practical) and more frequently if the person is heavy, transfers awkwardly, or if the following changes occur, e.g. if a person's:

- Condition deteriorates
- Cognition decreases
- Has a fall during bed transfers
- Has a fall / rolls out of bed
- Changes to medication are made, with significant side effects
- Communication ability decreases such that person can no longer make needs known
- An entrapment incident occurs
- Carer availability decreases

Check that:

- Item is still in place, in use and appropriate for the person
- The person can still demonstrate safe use of the item
- Bed stick has not bent and end cover of single point stick is in place
- If bed stick is a clamp on variety (for adjustable beds) check that clamp is functional and is secure
- Bed entrapment risk level assessed and an assessment of entrapment zones occurs as required
- Person/carers have been given information sheet “**Bed Stick Fact Sheet**”